

STUDY
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REPORT OF

THE COMMISSION ON THE STUDY OF
THE MANNER OF SELECTION OF MEMBERS
OF THE SEVERAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION OF
THE COUNTY AND CITY ADMINISTRATIVE
SCHOOL UNITS OF THE STATE

As provided by
the North Carolina General Assembly of 1961,
Resolution 21

1963
North Carolina

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MEMBERS OF COMMISSION

James V. Johnson, Chairman

Herman H. West, Vice-Chairman	Philip P. Godwin
Irwin Belk	N. Hector McGeachy, Jr.
Lawson Brown	Boyce A. Whitmire
Jack Felmet	Ben E. Fountain, Jr., Secretary

THE COMMISSION ON
THE STUDY OF THE MANNER OF SELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE SEVERAL
BOARDS OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY AND CITY ADMINISTRATIVE SCHOOL
UNITS OF THE STATE

STATE CAPITOL
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

FEBRUARY 6, 1963

Dear Governor Sanford:

Joint Resolution 21 of the General Assembly of 1961 provided for the establishment of The Commission on the Study of the Manner of Selection of Members of the Several Boards of Education of the County and City Administrative School Units of the State.

The Committee was directed by the General Assembly to consider a single feature of the public school system of the State, the manner of selection of members of local boards of education. The responsibility of the Commission is crucial, for it is concerned with the very foundations of local control of education. The task of the Commission is even more significant because of the enactment of legislation by that same General Assembly to strengthen markedly state support for the public schools.

The report of the Commission is herewith submitted to you and to the General Assembly of 1963. The Members of the Commission express their appreciation for this opportunity to serve North Carolina. We are hopeful that the recommendations will be of value to North Carolina as efforts are continued to attain unexcelled educational opportunity for her children.

Respectfully submitted,

James V. Johnson, Chairman

Herman H. West, Vice-Chairman
Irwin Belk
Lawson Brown
Jack Felmet
Philip P. Godwin
N. Hector McGeachy, Jr.
Boyce A. Whitmire
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INTRODUCTION

Education in North Carolina is a responsibility of the State under the Constitution. The State meets this responsibility in part by duly exercising a large measure of direction and control of schools through established agencies and officials. In addition the State traditionally and by law has delegated to local boards of education broad authority for the formulation of policy and direction of administration in the several administrative school units.

Several basic conclusions guided the Commission in arriving upon its recommendations. These conclusions are:

1. That broad responsibility for local direction of public education is essential for efficient and economic operation of the public schools and to stimulate interest in and support by local citizens for the schools;
2. That minimizing partisan politics at the state and local levels of control is in the best interest of public education;
3. That no single method of selection of members of boards of education is practical in large and diverse North Carolina;
4. That selection of school board members should become in fact a local function throughout the State.
5. That local boards of education should be so established as to eliminate majority turnover of membership at any one time and thereby provide for desirable continuity and experience in board members and for needed stability in the schools.

PRESENT METHODS OF SELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The Commission made no new and exhaustive study of the present manner of selection of members of local boards of education in North Carolina because of the ready availability of reasonably current information * on the subject. Also the Commission had available for its information from the United States office of Education recent publications ** which present nationwide data concerning methods of selection of school board members. Information from these studies pertinent to the work of the Commission is presented below.

Methods of selection of school board members in North Carolina were summarized as follows in the study by Dr. Morgan:

HOW BOARDS OF EDUCATION ARE SELECTED IN THE ONE HUNDRED COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Method of Selection	No. of Boards	Per Cent
With Approval of Legislature	99	
County wide by popular vote	17	17
County wide by townships	2	2
Appointed by Executive Committee of major political party	5	5
Nomination in political election	63	63
Nominated in non-partisan special school.. election	2	2
County wide election on partisan basis ...	6	6
Selected by legislator	4	4
Without Approval of Legislature	1	
Selected by voters in special partisan election	1	1
Total	100	100

...

* Roland Reginald Morgan, School Boards in North Carolina, Their Status, Functions and Activities (Chapel Hill: North Carolina School Boards Association Inc., 1956), 104 pp.

** Morrill M. Hall, Provisions Governing Membership on Local Boards of Education (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1957), 66pp

** Alpheus L. White, Local School Boards: Organization and Practices (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), 103 pp.

HOW MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION ARE SELECTED IN THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Method of Selection	Number of Boards	Percentage of total
1. Election by popular vote	33	44.6
a. From district at large.....	28	37.8
b. From district at large on partisan basis .	1	1.4
c. From district by wards	4	5.4
2. By appointment	40	54.0
a. At large by city council	20	27.0
b. By wards of city council	4	5.4
c. At large by board of aldermen	2	2.7
d. On ward basis by mayor with approval of city council	1	1.4
e. By county board of education	7	9.3
f. Board of Education recommends to city council	2	2.7
g. By local board of trustees	2	2.7
h. Recommendation of Democratic executive committee to legislature	1	1.4
i. By legislature	1	1.4
3. Combination of election and appointment	1	1.4
Total	74	100.0

Methods of selection of school board members in the nation as a whole were summarized by Assistant Specialist Hall as follows:

The most common method of selecting local school board members is by popular election. This method is used either exclusively or in certain districts in 42 States. In 33 of these States all school board members covered by the general statutes are elected by popular vote. In the other nine States most boards are chosen by this method.

In comparing the widespread use of this method with the number of districts in the 48 States, it can be reliably estimated that more than 95 percent of all school boards are elected by popular vote.

...

School board members are appointed in some or all districts in 15 States.

Methods of selection of school board members as determined

more recently from a sample of more than 4000 boards in the nation by Specialist White were as follows (Table only partially reproduced):

DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED SCHOOL BOARDS, BY DISTRICT
ENROLLMENT AND REGION

	TOTAL		ELECTED BOARDS		APPOINTED BOARDS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total school system reporting	4,045	100.0	3,473	85.9	572	14.1

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission accepts as a basic principle guiding the development of its recommendations that the selection of members of boards of education for the several county and city administrative school units of the State should be removed as completely as is practical from partisan politics. We recommend:

First, that the responsibility for the selection of school board members be placed in the hands of the local people in each administrative school unit;

Second, to accomplish this and to establish some uniformity of method of selection of school board members in the State, that two methods of selection of school board members be established, namely, (1) by direct non-partisan election by the eligible voters, of an administrative school unit, said election not to be held at the same time as party primaries and general elections, and/or (2) by non-partisan appointment by the appropriate city and/or county bodies, separately and/or jointly;

Third, that if the General Assembly adopts the above recommendations, the General Assembly shall decide initially which of the two recommended methods of selection of members of boards of education shall be used in each administrative school unit;

Fourth, that after the initial decision by the General Assembly, the question of which of the two methods of selection

of school board members shall be used in an administrative school unit shall be determined by the vote of the local people in the administrative school unit;

Fifth, in order to eliminate majority turnover of membership of school boards at any one time, that there be established for members of boards of education terms of office of six years, staggered terms of office, and a minimum number of five members per school board;

Sixth, that vacancies occurring for unexpired terms of office be filled by the appointing authority for appointed school boards and by the State Board of Education for elected school boards;

Seventh, so that the terms of present board of education members will not be affected, that the above recommendations not be put into effect prior to the year 1969.

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission met several times during the past two years for the purposes of study and formulation of recommendations. The Commission had available for its consideration recent information relating to present and recommended methods of selection of school board members in the State and nation.

The Commission solicited opinions and recommendations from groups and officials in the State believed to be concerned with the question of means of selection of school board members. Some of the organizations and individuals presented extensive information and suggestions. Others chose to decline the opportunity to participate for a variety of reasons. Also, several unsolicited, but valuable, opinions

and comments were considered by the Commission.

The Commission is deeply grateful for the interest and help tendered it by individuals and organizations. All documents considered are available in Commission files.

Resolution 21

A JOINT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING A STUDY OF THE MANNER IN WHICH MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION OF COUNTY AND CITY ADMINISTRATIVE SCHOOL UNITS ARE SELECTED AND TO MAKE ITS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 1963 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

WHEREAS, the members of the several boards of education of the several county and city administrative school units are selected in different ways in a large number of the counties and cities of the State; and

WHEREAS, it may be desirable that some uniformity be prescribed for the selection of such board members;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

Sec. 1. There is hereby created a Commission to be known as The Commission on the Study of the Manner of Selection of Members of the Several Boards of Education of the County and City Administrative School Units of the State. The Commission shall consist of nine members, three of whom shall be named by the Governor, three of whom shall be named by the Lieutenant Governor from the membership of the Senate, and three shall be named by the Speaker of the House of Representatives from the membership of that body. The Governor shall designate one of the members as chairman.

Sec. 2. It shall be the duty of the Commission herein created to make detailed and exhaustive study of the manner in which the members of the boards of education of the county and city administrative school units are selected.

Sec. 3. Immediately after its appointment, the commission shall meet at a time and place designated by the chairman and shall elect a

secretary. The commission shall meet at such other times as the Chairman may designate. The commission, with the approval of the Governor, is authorized to employ such clerical help and other assistance as it may deem necessary to carry out the purpose for which the commission is created. Per diem, subsistence and travel allowances incurred by the members of the commission shall be the same as is allowed State boards and commissions generally. Expenses incurred in the employment of clerical help and other assistance and per diem, subsistence and travel allowances incurred by the members of the commission, shall, with the approval of the Governor and the Council of State, be paid out of the State Contingency and Emergency Fund.

Sec. 4. The Commission shall make such recommendations to the 1963 Session of the General Assembly with respect to all matters relating to the problem herein set forth.

Sec. 5. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect upon its adoption.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 23rd day of March, 1961.

